

The following interview was recorded between Major Greathouse and S/Sgt Hillman on 23 November 1955.

MAJ GREATHOUSE: Would you state your name, rank, service number, home station and your duty.

S/Sgt HILLMAN: The name is Frank Hillman, Staff Sergeant, AF 19420110. Home station is Nellis and I'm a tower operator at Nellis.

MAJ G: I'm Major Greathouse from Norton AFB on the investigation of this C-54 accident near Charleston Peak. What were your duties on the morning of 17 November, do you recall?

Sgt H: I went to dental sick call about 0700 and I returned approximately 0830 or 0845. At that time I started working "B" position. The incident had happened before, I guess, where the aircraft had made a few calls on Baker Channel. When I started working "B" position, Ops asked me about this C-54 coming from Watertown. He had not heard anything. I looked on the inbound board and the aircraft was on the inbound board -- it's number and type but no ETA. I asked Sgt Arneho, who was working "A" position, if it was coming in here, and he said that he had no contact with it at that time, or had had no contact with the aircraft. I guess he was using Nellis as alternate and Operations didn't know whether he was coming in here or going on so they started checking Indian Springs and Watertown. I took over here on flight service box. And he hadn't shown up there and they had received no calls from him. So they called Salt Lake and asked if they had any information on the aircraft.

MAJ G: Did you call Salt Lake?

Sgt H: Yes, Sir. Base Ops called Salt Lake and they said the last time that they had was when he cancelled his IFR over Goodsprings, 0808 PST. And that's the last they'd had him. So they checked Cedar City and it was impossible for him to land there. They were socked in.

MAJ G: Where is Cedar City?

Sgt H: Cedar City is in Utah. It's about 160 miles from Las Vegas. That's ground miles. Air miles wouldn't be quite that far. And they checked Enterprise, which is north of Las Vegas and the aircraft was not there. They ran checks on all these fields at Nellis, McCarran, Desert Rock, Watertown, and there no place where the aircraft was at.

MAJ G: When you came back you took over from Airman Richeson?

Sgt H: Yes, Sir.

MAJ G: Had he received any calls from Base Ops up to that time?

SGT H: Not concerning the aircraft. He had received the aircraft number and the type, and that he would use Nellis as an alternate. That's the only information that he gave me when I took over working "B" position.

MAJ G: Did someone call you from Base Operations concerning the aircraft again after you took over?

SGT H: Yes, Sir, as far as I can remember, that is correct.

MAJ G: Who was it in Base Operations? Do you recall his initials?

SGT H: I believe it was W.S., Sgt Sanchez.

MAJ G: Did he ask you at any time to try to call the airplane. To try and make contact with it?

SGT H: I don't recall. Yes, Sir, he said that, he just asked if we had heard from him or if he was coming into Nellis. I believe that is what he asked.

MAJ G: Did you declare an emergency or anything of that nature when it was sort of determined that the aircraft might be missing in this area?

SGT H: No. We didn't declare an emergency on it. I mean, Flight Service was the one who was handling the matter at Base Ops more or less was handling the matter. They advised Flight Service. Flight Service alerted Air-Sea Rescue and all the available fields were checked. I checked with Boulder and the aircraft did not show up at Ace Field so it was more or less turned over to Flight Service and Air-Sea Rescue.

MAJ G: Have you had experience with this cancelling IFR clearances here in the Nellis area for aircraft going to Indian Springs and places like that?

SGT H: I haven't had too much experience with it other than cancelling. We had a few cancelling over Goodsprings and went on up skirting the other side of Charleston.

MAJ G: Has that been recently?

SGT H: I can't remember now when it was. A week or two weeks ago.

MAJ G: Do you recall whether that was a C-54?

SGT H: No. I believe it was a C-47.

MAJ G: Did you at any time hear Nellis Tower try to make contact with 9068?

SOT H: While I was working "B" position, the "A" operator tried to call him once or twice over there but then I was busy myself and couldn't hear everything that was going on.

MAJ G: That resulted in negative results each time?

SOT H: Yea, Sir.

MAJ G: Do you have anything else to offer that might concern this accident?

SOT H: No, Sir, I can't think of anything.

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